

The effect of knowledge management process on the employee commitment: Evidence from digital marketing industry

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CHRONICLE

Article history:

Received: September 18, 2020

Received in revised format:

November 18 2020

Accepted: December 24, 2020

Available online:

December 24, 2020

Keywords:

Knowledge Management

Knowledge Acquisition

Knowledge Conversion

Knowledge Application

Knowledge Protection

Employee commitment

ABSTRACT

Knowledge management is a process of systematic and transparent creation, development and application of knowledge to maximize knowledge-related performance and business value from knowledge and available wisdom assets. Knowledge management is vitally important with business and one of the competitive advantages. The aim of the study is to find out the relationship between the knowledge management process and employees' commitment in the digital marketing companies. Through the mix-method research, the research result pointed out that four dimensions of knowledge management process; i.e., Knowledge Acquisition, Knowledge Conversion, Knowledge Application, and Knowledge Protection, positively impact on the employee's commitment. Some managerial implications for the digital marketing businesses were proposed to improve the employee commitment based the knowledge management process.

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1. Introduction

Digital Marketing takes advantage of the combination of Internet and technology devices (computers, mobile phones) and other platforms to promote marketing activities, reach users, exchange information and promote products (Khoa, 2020a). Products and services, thereby helping to increase brand awareness, build trust and maximize revenue. The work of a Digital Marketer is very diverse, ranging from search engine optimization (related to Google, Bing, Yahoo, etc.), pushing a website to the top of the search page, designing website interface, writing content (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). A blog to conduct competitor analysis, deploys email marketing channel, produce YouTube videos, TikTok. Digital Marketing is a field that constantly changes over time, has a real battle, requires the ability to update expertise, even when working constantly. Therefore, marketers need to have a firm grasp of the background before going into each area and actively grasping new trends and features. Therefore, to share knowledge to improve work efficiency (Razzaq *et al.*, 2019). Knowledge management enriches and updates useful knowledge sources to use in the process of doing work (Indradewa *et al.*, 2016; Svetlik *et al.*, 2007). This activity has the effect of reducing errors, reducing repetitive tasks, reducing time and money costs; therefore, increase work performance (Aymen *et al.*, 2019; Razzaq *et al.*, 2019). The emergence of the knowledge economy from the end of the 20th century poses new challenges for businesses and administrators. Companies are under pressure to constantly innovate in products, services from upgrading production and business processes in order to survive and thrive in the market (Khoa, 2020b). Managers have to think about new management methods because command management and the tight control process were not suitable in a dynamic creative environment. When knowledge becomes more important than capital, labor in the composition of economic value, people think of a new central object of governance, which is knowledge management process. Knowledge management process (hereafter Knowledge Management), is seen as an important weapon to sustain

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their competitive advantage and improve the business performance (Todose, 2008). It solves problems related to adaptation with changes in the business environment and increases the survival of the organization based on transforming human capital into intellectual capital to create business value.

The understanding of knowledge management is also very different between the authors (Hlupic et al., 2002). Researching the relationship between Knowledge management - satisfaction - employee commitment results is an important and necessary issue to find out the impact of Knowledge management on human resources management results (Svetlik *et al.*, 2007). From there, offering solutions to improve and improve employee satisfaction and job completion results in order to improve the organization's operational efficiency (Aymen et al., 2019). There are many studies on the impact of organizational commitment on the knowledge management (Gopinath, 2019; Marques et al., 2019), or the mediation role of organizational commitment in a relationship between many independent constructs and the Knowledge management (Cugueró-Escofet et al., 2019; Garrido-Moreno et al., 2014; Razzaq et al., 2019). There have been limited in the studies on the impact of knowledge management on employee commitment, especially, Knowledge management is four dimensions, including Knowledge Acquisition, Knowledge Conversion, Knowledge Application, and Knowledge Protection. Therefore, this study was conducted to measure the impact of Knowledge management process on employees' commitment in the digital marketing industry.

Excluding the introduction, the rest content of the study is arranged as follows: Part 2 presented the theories related the knowledge management process, the employee's commitment, and the relationship between all research constructs; Part 3 summarized the research method; Part 4 described the research results; Part 5 discussed the research results; and finally, part 6 showed the conclusions and managerial implications.

2. Literature review

2.1. Knowledge management

Knowledge management is the process of creating, disseminating, transferring, using and protecting existing and new knowledge (Gopinath, 2019). Knowledge management is the process of continuously managing all knowledge and skills to predict current, and future development needs to identify, explore existing knowledge as well as develop the opportunity to acquire new knowledge (Garrido-Moreno *et al.*, 2014). In a business, the knowledge management is a continuous process from acquiring, storing, distributing and disseminating knowledge into organizational operation (Razzaq *et al.*, 2019).

The effectiveness of knowledge management through the process with four steps: acquisition, creation, storage, and application (Aujirapongpan *et al.*, 2010); or acquisition, conversion, application, and protection (Gold *et al.*, 2001; Lytras & Sicilia, 2005). Concepts, according to these approach that knowledge management process is a continuous process in acquiring/creating, transferring/converting, using/applying, and storing/protecting knowledge. Inside:

- Knowledge Acquisition is the process that the employees can access and absorb directly, or indirectly with knowledge sources (He *et al.*, 2013). The employees acquire the knowledge from internal sources as documents, instructions on procedures, processes, transferring from colleagues; and external sources, i.e., competitor information, customer data, market data. The more information technology develops, leadership style adapts, and organizational culture about information sharing is established; the easier Knowledge Acquisition is (Aujirapongpan *et al.*, 2010; Gold *et al.*, 2001).

- Knowledge Conversion is the process that the knowledge is converted to make it useful. The knowledge is coded to meet the users' need in their job. The Knowledge Conversion process includes knowledge integration, coordination, restructure, and distribution of knowledge (Gold *et al.*, 2001).

- Knowledge Application describes the process that employees and organizations use knowledge in their business (Gold *et al.*, 2001). The result of Knowledge Application is to develop and innovate the product or service to improve the business performance and reduce production costs (Razzaq *et al.*, 2019).

- Knowledge Protection is the step that the businesses stores, refine to make it useful and valuable to the organization/ The knowledge has a role as organizational intelligence, i.e., protect, maintain and preserve knowledge (Aujirapongpan *et al.*, 2010; Gopinath, 2019)

2.2. Employee Commitment

Employee Commitment is defined as an employee's enduring desire to maintain a quality relationship with the company (Moorman *et al.*, 1992; Plewa & Quester, 2006). Commitment arises when both sides (company and employee) recognize the importance of a relationship and then work together to ensure the relationship is sustainable (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Commitment includes a sense of commitment to work, loyalty and belief in the organization's values (Meyer et al., 2012). According to Allen and Meyer (1990), employee's commitment to the organization is measured based on their belief in the organization, their acceptance of the organization's goals and values, and their willingness to work hard for organization, and want to become a member of the organization (Nijhof et al., 1998). Commitment to the organization is based on three components: Affective, continuance, and normative commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1996). In which, affective commitment is a decisive factor to the dedication and loyalty of employees to the business. (Rhoades et al., 2001). Employees with affective commitment are considered familiar and will increase their participation in the activities of the organization, and they are also willing to pursue the goals of the organization and desire to work for the long term at business (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

When businesses build a continuous flow of communication in the organization, and there is social interaction among employees, knowledge sharing will be formed. The greater the formation of sharing rules, the greater the employee's commitment to regulation (Song et al., 2006). Employee's high commitment to the organization when the company is successful in creating and sharing knowledge (Alvesson, 2000). Employees' commitment will not be created unless there is a clear rule governing knowledge of workers (Cabrera & Cabrera, 2005). Therefore, four the dimensions of knowledge management process would have a positive impact on employee commitment as the Figure 1. The hypotheses were proposed:

Hypothesis 1: Knowledge Acquisition has a positive impact on employee commitment.

Hypothesis 2: Knowledge Conversion has a positive impact on employee commitment.

Hypothesis 3: Knowledge Application has a positive impact on employee commitment.

Hypothesis 4: Knowledge Protection has a positive impact on employee commitment.

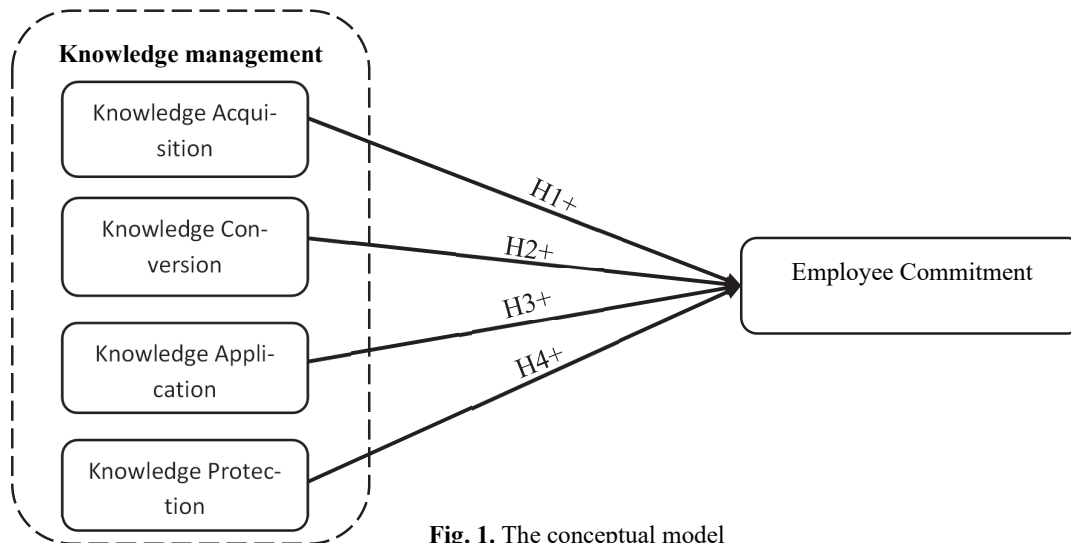


Fig. 1. The conceptual model

3. Research method

This research method included qualitative and quantitative research methods. The qualitative research method was used to confirm and adjust the measurement scales, which were adopted from the previous studies (Khoa & Nguyen, 2020). The data in qualitative research was collected from group discussion with nine experts, who are the middle and top management, as well as the experts in the human resources in the digital marketing company. The discussion lasted 3 hours and took place in the meeting room of Innoteq Company, a digital marketing (innoteq.vn). The authors were the chair to control the discussion and took note of the main ideas. The discussion content also was recorded. The focus groups discussion result pointed out that the research model and all the scales were suitable for the survey. A questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale was used to collect data for each construct of the study. The instrument development was based on previous studies. Table 1 summarizes the items used in each scale.

Table 1

The measurement scale

Construct	Items	Source
Knowledge Acquisition (ACQ)	<i>My company has processes for...</i> ACQ1 - ... generating new knowledge from existing knowledge ACQ2 - ...using feedback from projects to improve subsequent projects ACQ3 - ...distributing knowledge throughout my company ACQ4 - ...exchanging knowledge with our business partner ACQ5 - ...acquiring knowledge about new products/services within the digital marketing industry ACQ6 - ...acquiring knowledge about competitor within our digital marketing	Gold et al. (2001)
Knowledge Conversion (CON)	<i>My company has processes for...</i> CON1 - ...filtering knowledge CON2 - ...transferring organizational knowledge to individuals. CON3 - ...absorbing knowledge from individuals into my company CON4 - ...integrating different sources and types of knowledge.	Gold et al. (2001)
Knowledge Application (APP)	<i>My company has...</i> APP1 - applied knowledge learned from mistakes. APP2 - used knowledge to solve new problems APP3 - used knowledge to improve efficiency APP4 - matched sources of knowledge to problems and challenges APP5 - quickly applied knowledge to critical competitive needs	Gold et al. (2001)

Construct	Items	Source
Knowledge Protection (PRO)	<i>My company has.</i> PRO1 – ... processes to protect knowledge from inappropriate use inside my company PRO2 – ...has processes to protect knowledge from theft within my company PRO3 – ...valued and protected knowledge embedded in individuals PRO4 - Knowledge that is restricted is identified PRO5 – Clearly communicates the importance of protecting knowledge.	Gold et al. (2001)
Employee Commitment (COM)	COM1 – I consider knowledge management to be a top priority. COM2 - I motivate and encourage my colleague to share the knowledge COM3 - My performance is measured and rewarded based on my ability to share the knowledge COM4 - Training programs are designed to help me develop the skills needed to manage the knowledge sharing process effectively. COM5 – I committed to using knowledge sharing system to achieve high levels of job performance.	Garrido-Moreno et al. (2014)

The respondents in the study were the employees in the digital marketing company in Vietnam, aged from 25 years old. The sampling method was purposive sampling in non-probability sampling. Out of 700 self-administered questionnaires distributed by mail, a total of 611 completed responses were collected. The value has already fulfilled the minimum response rate of approximately 87.3%. The respondent's description was shown in Fig. 2. All data were already well screened and used the SmartPLS software for PLS-SEM analysis.

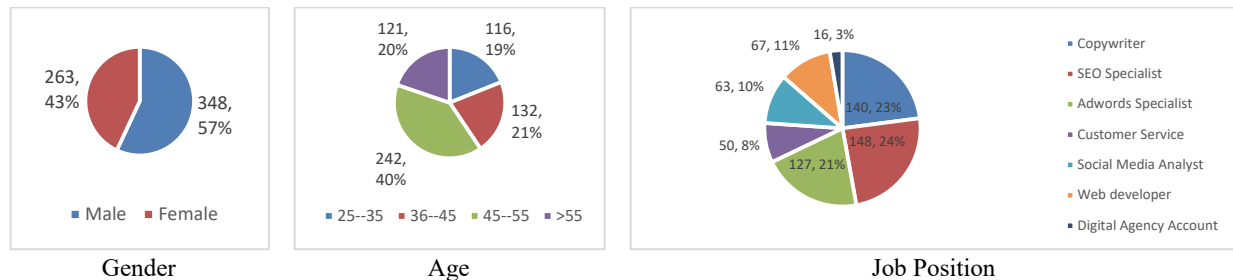


Fig. 2. The respondents' description

This study used the PLS-SEM (Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling) to process the data and test the research hypotheses. Using proxies as input, PLS-SEM applies Ordinary Least Squares to minimize error terms (such as residual variance) of endogenous constructs. PLS-SEM estimates the coefficients (i.e., the path model relationship) such that to maximize the R^2 values of the endogenous (target) construct, which achieves the predicted target of PLS-SEM. Thus, PLS-SEM is the preferred method when the purpose of the research is to develop the theory and explain the variance (prediction of structures).

4. Research result

4.1. The measurement scale reliability

Reliability test is to confirm whether an instrument consistently measures the construct. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient (CA) is a statistical test of the degree of rigour of questionable items on the scale-correlated. The reliable measurement scale has the 0.7 or greater of CA. The inconsistent items will be removed if the Corrected Item - Total Correlation is less than 0.3. The CA of 05 constructs in the research was shown in Table 2. All CA of measurement scales were higher than 0.7 ($CA_{\min} = 0.852$), the Corrected Item - Total Correlation of all items in the research were greater than 0.3 (minimum Corrected Item - Total Correlation was 0.587). Therefore, all measurement scale got reliability.

Table 2

The reliability of measurement scale

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Corrected Item-Total Correlation
ACQ	0.874	[0.63 - 0.713]
APP	0.933	[0.778 - 0.852]
COM	0.852	[0.587 - 0.731]
CON	0.881	[0.649 - 0.848]
PRO	0.91	[0.729 - 0.861]

4.2. The measurement scale validity

This research assessed the scale validity through convergent validity and discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2016). The result in Table 3 showed that the highest HTMT was 0.739 (between PRO and COM), which was less than 0.85. Consequently, the discriminant validity of all the scales was archived. The convergent validity was evaluated via three criteria, including (1) the Composite Reliability (CA), which is equal or more than 0.7; (2) Average Variance Extracted (AVE), which is equal or more than 0.5; (3) outer loading, which is more than 0.708. All criteria above were met the threshold in Table 5; hence, all measurement scale had the convergent validity. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) between two constructs is used to assess the discriminant validity. The threshold of HTMT is lower than 0.85, will show the discriminant.

Table 3

The result of discriminant analysis

	ACQ	APP	COM	CON
APP	0.459			
COM	0.635	0.772		
CON	0.601	0.451	0.626	
PRO	0.473	0.498	0.739	0.45

Table 4

The result of convergent validity.

Items	Outer loading					CA	AVE
	ACQ	APP	COM	CON	PRO		
ACQ1	0.818						
ACQ2	0.79						
ACQ3	0.789					0.905	0.613
ACQ4	0.787						
ACQ5	0.751						
ACQ6	0.761						
APP1		0.911					
APP2		0.893					
APP3		0.895				0.949	0.788
APP4		0.884					
APP5		0.854					
COM1			0.82				
COM2			0.8				
COM3			0.836			0.894	0.629
COM4			0.736				
COM5			0.772				
CON1				0.833			
CON2				0.797			
CON3				0.925		0.919	0.739
CON4				0.879			
PRO1					0.823		
PRO2					0.84		
PRO3					0.866	0.933	0.737
PRO4					0.847		
PRO5					0.913		

4.3. The PLS-SEM

The PLS-SEM, which has the bootstrap procedure with 5000 random subsamples, was assessed with five criteria (Khoa *et al.*, 2020).

- Collinearity is assessed through VIF value is less than 2.
- Coefficient of Determination (R^2) values 0.75, 0.50, or 0.25; respectively, the substantial, moderate, or weak explanation of the change of dependent construct under the impact of the independent construct.
- Effect Size (f^2) value 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35; respectively, represent small, medium, and large effects the exogenous latent variable.
- Predictive Relevance (Q^2) must be larger than 0.
- Lastly, Path Coefficient is assessed through the p-value, which is less than 0.05 in 95% of confidence level.

The table 6 pointed out that all the VIF value is smaller than 2; hence, there was no collinearity between the constructs in the research model. The COM was explained in 67.4% by the change of independent variables. The APP and PRO have the medium effect size on the COM; respectively, 0.349 and 0.257; ACQ and CON have the small effect size on COM with f^2 value, respectively, were 0.048, 0.049. The result of the Q^2 value in Table 6 was more than 0 ($Q^2_{CON} = 0.415$).

Table 5The result of VIF, R^2 , f^2 , and Q^2

Construct	VIF	R^2	f^2	Q^2
	COM		COM	
ACQ	1.547		0.048	
APP	1.417		0.349	
COM		0.674		0.415
CON	1.513		0.049	
PRO	1.424		0.257	

In Table 6, four the path coefficients in this study were accepted from 0.156 to 0.402, and the p-value of the valid path coefficients were 0.00, which is less than 0.001. Hence, the PLS-SEM could describe in the regression model as:

$$COM = 0.156 \times ACQ + 0.402 \times APP + 0.156 \times CON + 0.345 \times PRO$$

Table 6
The PLS-SEM result

Relationships	Original Sample (O)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
ACQ → COM	0.156	0.031	5.022	0.00
APP → COM	0.402	0.031	12.752	0.00
CON → COM	0.156	0.030	5.143	0.00
PRO → COM	0.345	0.032	10.777	0.00

5. Discussion

People are living in an age where the world economy is transforming from an economy based mainly on the limited resources of nature to an economy of information and intelligence. Natural resources are excluded from the competition program; knowledge and skills are the only resources that create a sustainable competitive advantage (Nguyen & Khoa, 2020). In terms of hierarchy, knowledge is at the highest position in the chain of data - information - knowledge concepts (Liew, 2007). Data is a set of discrete, objective facts or facts presented without judgment or with no context. Data can exist in the form of text, images, or sound. When data is processed, i.e., through classification, analysis, synthesis, put into a context and becomes meaningful to the recipient, it becomes information. It can be said that information is meaningful data after it has been processed. Information becomes knowledge when it is perceived and valued through the critical reception of thought. It can be said that knowledge is useful information perceived by human intellect (Cooper, 2017).

Firstly, Knowledge Acquisition had a significant positive impact on employee commitment (beta = 0.156, sig. = 0.00); hence, the hypothesis H1 was accepted. Knowledge Acquisition is the input of the Knowledge Management process; hence, it is vitally important to develop the process. The quality and quantity of input information will create good or bad knowledge (Koskinen *et al.*, 2003). The good process of knowledge gathering will create the satisfaction and connection of employees with the business because they feel fair values in the future when working at the company (Roy & Thérin, 2008). Business enterprises in the digital marketing field need to have active solutions, such as building an online database system to store instructions and feedback after each project. Also, enterprises need to build consumer intelligence systems or marketing/management information system (MIS) to exchange and acquire the knowledge from the markets, competitors, partners.

Knowledge Conversion is the next step after the businesses acquire knowledge. In this research, Knowledge Conversion had a positive effect on Employee Commitment (Beta = 0.156, sig. = 0.00); hence, the hypothesis H2 was accepted.. The degree of impact of Conversion Knowledge and Acquisition Knowledge on Employee Commitment is the same. With the development of science and technology, it should be assumed that acquiring knowledge will be easy, and more knowledge will be gathered (Curado & Vieira, 2019); therefore, digital marketing businesses need to know how to refine their knowledge to remove useless knowledge and keep the useful ones (Konnot, 1994). Besides, transforming business knowledge into personal knowledge is also important. A digital marketing agency needs a data processing system that can even group data collected from the marketplace. Besides, short training sessions are also a method to cover knowledge from the organization to the employees of the digital marketing industry.

Knowledge Application in digital marketing enterprises positively impacts employee commitment (Beta = 0.402, sig. = 0.00); hence, the hypothesis H3 was accepted. The application of knowledge has the strongest impact on the four factors on employee engagement in digital marketing firms. In fact, for employees, the application of knowledge at work is the most concrete step that shows the value of knowledge management in the enterprise (Razzaq *et al.*, 2019). The application of knowledge will create efficiency and productivity of employees' work; thereby, they will feel the benefits of knowledge management in the working process and become more connected to the current work (Curado & Vieira, 2019). Enterprises need to employ their knowledge to solve problems at work, or even case by case for similar jobs to improve job efficiency. Enterprises simultaneously build a database of common activities or problems so that the application of knowledge can take place faster and more efficiently, thereby enhancing the competitiveness of businesses.

Last but not least, Knowledge Protection is one of the most important steps in the Knowledge Management process. Based the research result, the Knowledge Protection positively effect on the Employee Commitment (Beta = 0.345, sig. = 0.00); therefore, the hypothesis H4 was accepted. Because of the important nature of knowledge, it is important to protect against knowledge theft. In many cases, knowledge is not only stolen by external theft, but also by an employee of the business (Cumin *et al.*, 2019; Smith *et al.*, 2011). Identification when accessing the management system needs to be taken seriously. Besides, propaganda through email, website and local message boards, and the enterprise must provide specific penalties if there are threats, data theft and enterprise knowledge.

6. Conclusion

This study has examined the relationship between a knowledge management process and employee commitment in the digital marketing company. Qualitative research ensured the suitability of the items, as well as the relationship between the constructs. Additionally, the study also used survey methods in quantitative research. Through analyzing 611 responses, research has shown that Knowledge Application had the strongest impact on Employee Commitment; as well as Knowledge Acquisition and Knowledge Conversion had the lowest effect on the Employee Commitment. This study has not only theoretical but also practical contributions. Theoretically, this study based on the four dimensions of Knowledge Management Process of (Gold *et al.*, 2001); i.e., Knowledge Acquisition, Knowledge Conversion, Knowledge Application, and Knowledge Protection, to assess the relationship between the Knowledge Management process and Employee Commitment. The result pointed

out that there is a positive impact of Knowledge Management on Employee Commitment. Hence, the commitment of the employee may be the consequence of the organization and using data in the business. Practically, the research proposed many managerial implications for the business to improve employee commitment with the company and their job. The main motivating solutions focused on the Knowledge Application and Knowledge Protection, two final steps in the Knowledge Management process.

The limitations of a study are inevitable; however, there are opportunities for further studies. Despite certain efforts, this study still had some limitations. First, this research was only focused on the digital marketing industry, closely linked with knowledge management's dynamic. Another was a discrete assessment of dimensions of knowledge management that affect employee commitment. Further studies may expand disciplines closely related to knowledge management to demonstrate the stability of the model. Another step forward in research is to compare and evaluate two-way relationships between knowledge management and employee commitment. Finally, further studies can assess knowledge management as a formative concept in measuring the relationship between knowledge management and other constructs.

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